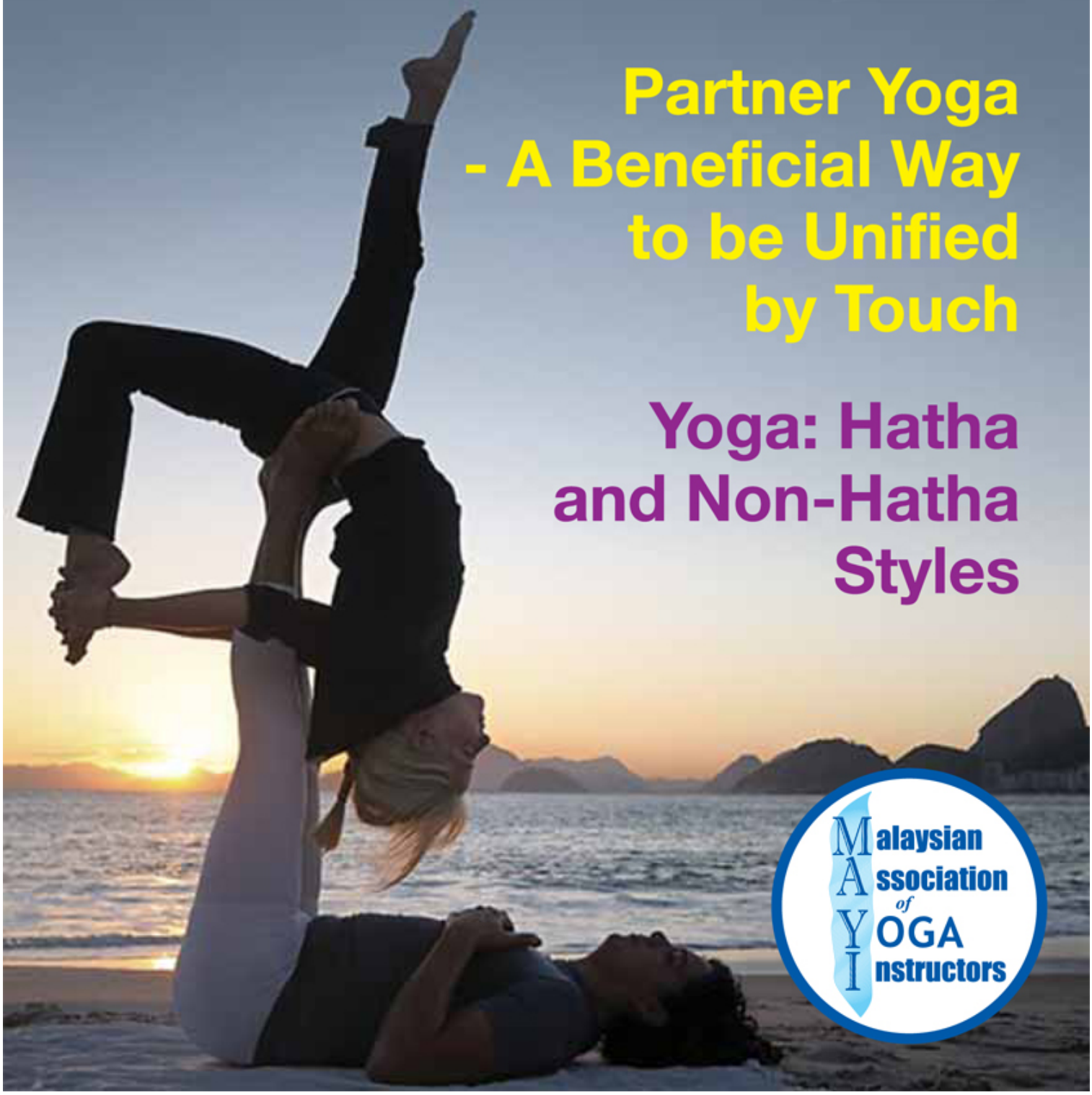
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Partner Yoga - A Beneficial Way to be Unified by Touch

Yoga: Hatha and Non-Hatha Styles

Malaysian Association of YOGA Instructors

Message from Master Mani

UNITY



It has never been more important in life than now to remain united. In future, people are not going to be fighting against each other in the name of nationality, religion or ideologies, but against the rage of nature.

When the earth reacts to human greed for butchering her, all fury will be unleashed. We can already see it coming. In Malaysia, temperatures used to be hovering between 28-31 degrees celsius, but now they are soaring up to 38 degrees!

World over, natural disasters are happening spontaneously, with hundreds if not thousands of incidences per week! For example, drought and water rationing are being experienced at unprecedented levels now.

In this situation, do we have the luxury to be unscrupulously used by a few conniving minds to create illusory issues of race, religion and politics to segregate us further, just so that they can gain political mileage and power? Definitely not!

Be it natural or otherwise, if the issues are about basic survival processes, people will unite at lightning speed, whether or not at the comfort of the powers that be. When they are restless, they can't rationalise and would do anything if they feel their basic needs are not provided for. That may cause unrest. How to solve this impending disaster?

The answer lies in unity, in each person's ability to look beyond the differences on the outside and be prepared to fight as one force — be it against the challenges caused by nature or man.

We need to be united to be able to have the power to call for immediate solutions, and be united in demanding peacefully, but sternly, for that which needs to be righted. If inefficiency can be curbed at all levels, then these woes won't be experienced... People would be able to get a decent bath daily, they wouldn't need to wait two full days every week to get a proper supply of water.

Two incidents happened recently involving water. One of the pipes at the block I stay in was leaking near the water meter (only one or two centimetres from the meter). It took 8 calls to get the water department officials to come. They came, looked, wrote something, giggled and then drove away.

There were repeated visits. Sometimes two cars will come (often nice and comfortable SUVs), and up to 8 guys at a time (my block's security guard had counted!). And finally, after two weeks and hundreds of litres of water gone to waste, they replaced the pipe. Replacing a 5cm pipe took 2 weeks.

This week, another pipe at another block was bursting in a similar manner and we residents watched the same show of cars coming in, looking, writing and giggling, and then driving away. Meantime, dozens of litres of water was going to waste again.

This is gross inefficiency, unawareness and childish behaviour. We see this in almost all monopolised industries, agencies and at Uncle Sam's.

I believe we can solve, create and evolve to be the best nation if only we can train ourselves to be super aware, efficient and united in this vision, with fair equitable distribution of employment and training. Yoga training, especially Kriya and Pranayama with daily Asanas and yogic detox would alleviate tamas (lethargy) and make everyone excel happily.

Thank you and let's strive to be super efficient and not an iota less than that.

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Partner Yoga - A Beneficial Way to be Unified by Touch

by Chandra Nanthakumar

Yoga is definitely not an instant solution to any life issue; nevertheless, if it is practiced with dedication, it can be a very effective therapy. Some of the most common types of yoga practiced today are hatha, vinyasa and astanga, which are individual practices. However, partner yoga has gained attention over the past decades due to its numerous benefits. This yoga creates the opportunity for interdependent partnership. Unlike partner-assisted yoga, where one person is doing the asana while the other is assisting, Partner Yoga postures are mutually beneficial (Carroll & Kimata, 2008). Contrary to the popular belief, Partner Yoga is not sexual (Williamson, 2004). For those who are unfamiliar with this practice, Partner Yoga involves two or more people working together to deepen the impact and experience of a yoga practice. The key component that differentiates partner practice from individual practice is touch. Traction and leverage are incorporated and the kinesthetic awareness that comes from touch flows to greater depths in the bodies and consciousness of the practitioners. The splendour of this yoga is that it not only connects people through touch, but also through movement, play, breath and intimacy.

Partner Yoga helps to cultivate touch and all asanas in this form of yoga incorporate touch. Having said so, the act of 'touching' may not go very well with all and sundry. This could be due to several factors such as upbringing, culture and also personality. However, studies have revealed that touch is very important in the release of cortisol, an important adrenal hormone, and in the regulation of the human stress-response system (Carlson & Carlson, 2007). This hormone has tremendous effects on the body's metabolism, immunity and neural functioning. In fact, studies have shown that children who do not get the loving 'touch' of their parents exhibit social and behavioural issues, and suppressed physical growth. Other studies show similar findings that adults too require compassionate and loving touch for optimal health and happiness (Montagu, 1986).

Somehow, in many cultures, the relationship between sex and touch has been misconstrued and this has made people fearful. As I see it, Partner Yoga is an opportunity to examine one's own sexuality from a very different point of view. What if a sudden sexual thought crosses the mind while lying on a partner's back in a completely relaxed manner? Partner yoga provides one with an opportunity to embrace that moment and observe the feelings and thoughts. There is no need to repress them or act on them. One could just witness them. Eventually, these thoughts or feelings will teach one more about oneself. The invaluable opportunity to experience touch and sexuality in a unique way may be missed if one immediately indulges in or runs away from these thoughts.



Besides, Partner Yoga helps to augment one's fitness level. Our health depends on how fit we feel and generally fitness is associated with physical fitness. However, in Partner Yoga, the idea of physical fitness goes way beyond that. It encompasses not only physical, but also mental, emotional and spiritual fitness. While some people are happy sauntering in the park for 30 minutes a day, others may prefer to do intense cardio exercise on a treadmill for one hour in the gymnasium. A person's physical fitness is the consequence of everything the person does, and lifestyle is definitely one influencing factor. The beauty about Partner Yoga is that it helps a person cultivate a healthy lifestyle. The breathing techniques incorporated in the asanas help to increase the lung capacity and enhance blood circulation, thus improving one's complexion. Asanas which involve bending and twisting allow expulsion of toxins

from the body. These types of asanas also help to tone the muscles and the central nervous system. When one practices Partner Yoga, the breath, the asanas and the partnership help the mind achieve a state of tranquility. This is extremely important in the practice as the mind is cluttered with thousands and thousands of thoughts. The mind may appear like a war zone, especially if there are conflicting and disturbing thoughts at the same time. Hence, by taking time to indulge in Partner Yoga, one is able to prepare the mind to focus on breathing, steadiness and coordination. This is deemed as training the mind to uncover peace amidst the turmoil in the brain.

According to J. Krishnamurti, "When the mind is still, tranquil, not seeking any answer or solution, even, neither resisting nor avoiding, it is only then that there can be regeneration, because then the mind is capable of perceiving what is true and it is the truth that liberates, not our effort to be free." (Menkin, 1996, p83) . Therefore, the mind cannot be made peaceful but one can allow the mind to let go of the distracting superfluous thoughts that is a great hindrance to our peace-finding mission.

Partner Yoga can be made to instil fun where practitioners can simply go into stitches. Keeping in mind that life is meant to be enjoyed, good health comes with lightness and joy. There is no point in placing so much emphasis on doing things 'right' when the joy cannot be felt within. Studies have proven that the power of laughter is magnificent that it can cure life-threatening diseases (Cousins, 2005). If one can approach Partner Yoga with a sense of humour and creativity, one would be able to reap the benefits of this Yoga.

Aside from fun and frolic, Partner Yoga is a tool for relaxation. Human beings have more than enough to do from daily chores to running errands while holding on to a job to make ends meet. To make matters worse, our culture places so much importance on what we do. Nevertheless, we need to be cautious so that we do not become a race of human 'doings'. Amongst many other activities, Partner Yoga is about learning how to relax and be with oneself. For instance, if you are practising a particular asana and you are experiencing discomfort, you will need to look into the discomfort and find a new way to breathe into the asana to release that tension. The journey of going into, being in and coming out of the asana is of utmost importance if you want to be in repose. Hence, it is essential to take some time to look into how you are managing the daily stresses of life when you practise Partner Yoga.

Lastly, Partner Yoga is really beneficial in strengthening relationships. Though Partner Yoga can be practised with anyone, most people tend to practise it with a person they already have a relationship with. That person may be the spouse, friend, lover or even offspring. In the practice of Partner Yoga, there is not only verbal communication, but also lots of physical contact and mutual support, and all these definitely contribute towards a healthier relationship.

In short, Partner Yoga has so much to give to the practitioner. However, it is not a substitute for individual practice. It is a practice that cultivates touch, augments one's fitness level, promotes relaxation and fun, strengthens relationships as well as deepens one's individual Yoga practice. **YM**



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Yoga: Hatha and Non-Hatha Styles

by Petra Gimbad

Introduction

Many schools of yoga draw on the hatha tradition. There are several explanations why: devoted hatha practitioners teach that it is the traditional manner of practicing yoga, whereby its lineage can be traced back to older origins. In contrast, many other popular schools of yoga have benefited from their American-influenced modern predecessors: creating a contemporary, gym-focused practice that appeals to urban folk. This approach has been widely criticised for its deviation from the original yogic approaches and for causing unnecessary injuries to students.

Master Mani mooted a compassionate perspective to this concern recently. He observed that in recent times, Indian yogis chose to teach a style of yoga that pleases Westerners without including the holistic explanations that are necessary to avoid injury. Ignorance of yogic philosophy and the various energies that the practitioner must be aware of, to fully benefit from the practice, has meant that yoga is often viewed upon as an exercise. Many students of yoga therefore know yoga as asana – meaning the physical practice of yoga – and little of its mental and philosophical aspects.

It is from that compassionate standpoint that I discuss why hatha yoga is beneficial, as well as to understand non-judgmentally why it is that students may be attracted to non-hatha schools.

Additionally, it is important to acknowledge that non-hatha schools may in fact have hatha roots, or combine hatha and non-hatha teachings. I have met amazing instructors who teach non-hatha yoga, only to find out that they have trained in the hatha lineage. Or, who teach hatha yoga and who have additional perspectives to offer due to their exposure to non-hatha schools.

Taken positively, this illustrates how easily the simple practice of hatha yoga may be assimilated into other practices and our daily lives, even if its role is little acknowledged by those who have yet to understand the principles of hatha.

Ha-tha

Hatha, an abbreviated combination of the Sanskrit terminology for the words 'sun' and 'moon', acknowledges the necessity of balancing both masculine and feminine energies from the onset. This is clearly seen in the structure of a hatha class, where active poses are followed by restful poses. For example: students are guided to lie in Shavasana after performing Sun Salutations, before moving onto other poses. Even the Sun Salutation itself contains a period of rest: whereby students are told to rest in Moon pose for a few breaths, before continuing the rest of the practice. The principle of periods of activity, followed by rest, is continued throughout the remaining of the class – where active poses are interspersed by Shavasana, Moon or Flapping Fish poses.

This proved frustrating when I returned to a hatha practice after years of exercising at the gym, hiking and rock climbing. Consequently, I tried other non-hatha schools for a while. This was not to betray my hatha roots, but to find a yoga practice that would build cardiovascular and muscular strength in a manner that I was used to. Hatha was perfect as a complement to my other activities, and this is the reason I would recommend it as an ideal practice to complement exercisers who wish to cross-train. However, after moving away from a gym and the outdoors, all that remained was yoga: and I needed a practice that would allow me to enjoy the benefits of the other exercises that I had been doing for a few years.

Eventually, I discovered several schools that utilised different styles of teaching. There were pros and cons to their approaches, relative to my physical and mental needs at the time. The approach which I stayed with for a while, practiced weight-bearing poses at a greater frequency – such as Mountain, standing poses and Upward Dog (a backbend posture similar to Cobra, but with the pelvis raised off the ground) – provided my body the workout it needed after I stopped rock climbing. I enjoyed this particular aspect.

However, I quickly observed that such an active style of yoga might not appeal to everyone. Firstly, it demands a significant amount of muscular strength and flexibility, which may be bewildering to beginners. Its version of the Sun Salutation did not incorporate the Moon pose, and staying in Mountain instead was viewed to be a 'rest' pose. I could see how this would not be the case for students I had taught in the past, who lack the upper body strength, suffering shoulder injuries or recovering from illness and needed a slower practice. I too unfortunately have suffered injuries with overzealous instructors, and this could have been easily avoided with additional guidance on how to listen to one's body.

The exposure to this school was ultimately beneficial: it allowed me to see why it was appropriate for a certain type of personality, which I fitted into at the time – reasonably healthy and competitive. The physical challenges in the practice were a needed form of meditation as I had to push whatever stresses there were in my mind, out. The effort required to practice that form of yoga provided respite from the stressful job that I held at the time, and made me a more pleasant and resilient person at work. It allowed me to sweat out my tension on the mat, and helped me see that physical challenge is necessary for some personality types to ready the mind for meditation.

That said, I had to stop when I experienced injuries from instructors who were trained in the 'hands-on' approach – twisting and bending my body beyond what I was ready for, instead of trusting that I will get there, even if it would take longer. I also needed a school of learning that would not only provide the tools for a physically challenging practice, but also the philosophical lessons that were needed to provide a perspective that students craved. Ultimately, what most of us come to yoga class for is to find that sense of peace. Some students are able to create space through a more restful routine, and I was interested in hatha as it provided that flexibility – to create active and restful routines, or some combination of both.

A great strength that can be acquired from the practice of yoga is that of learning to observe one's own thoughts and emotions non-judgmentally. I have observed how at one time or another, I had decided quite firmly that a certain exercise was better than yoga, or how a certain style of yoga was superior to all others. Now with more than ten years of practice, I find myself embracing a gentler view that allows for my convictions and experiences to speak: I believe that my path of hatha has more to offer me and my students than other schools. However, I am less likely to criticise other schools now, as they too had provided me both positive and negative lessons that now benefit my practice and my classroom.

If I were to provide advice to a person interested in yoga, I would explain the hatha principles and maintain the importance of being able to listen to and trust the language of the body. Then, I would support whatever practice the person chooses to embrace.

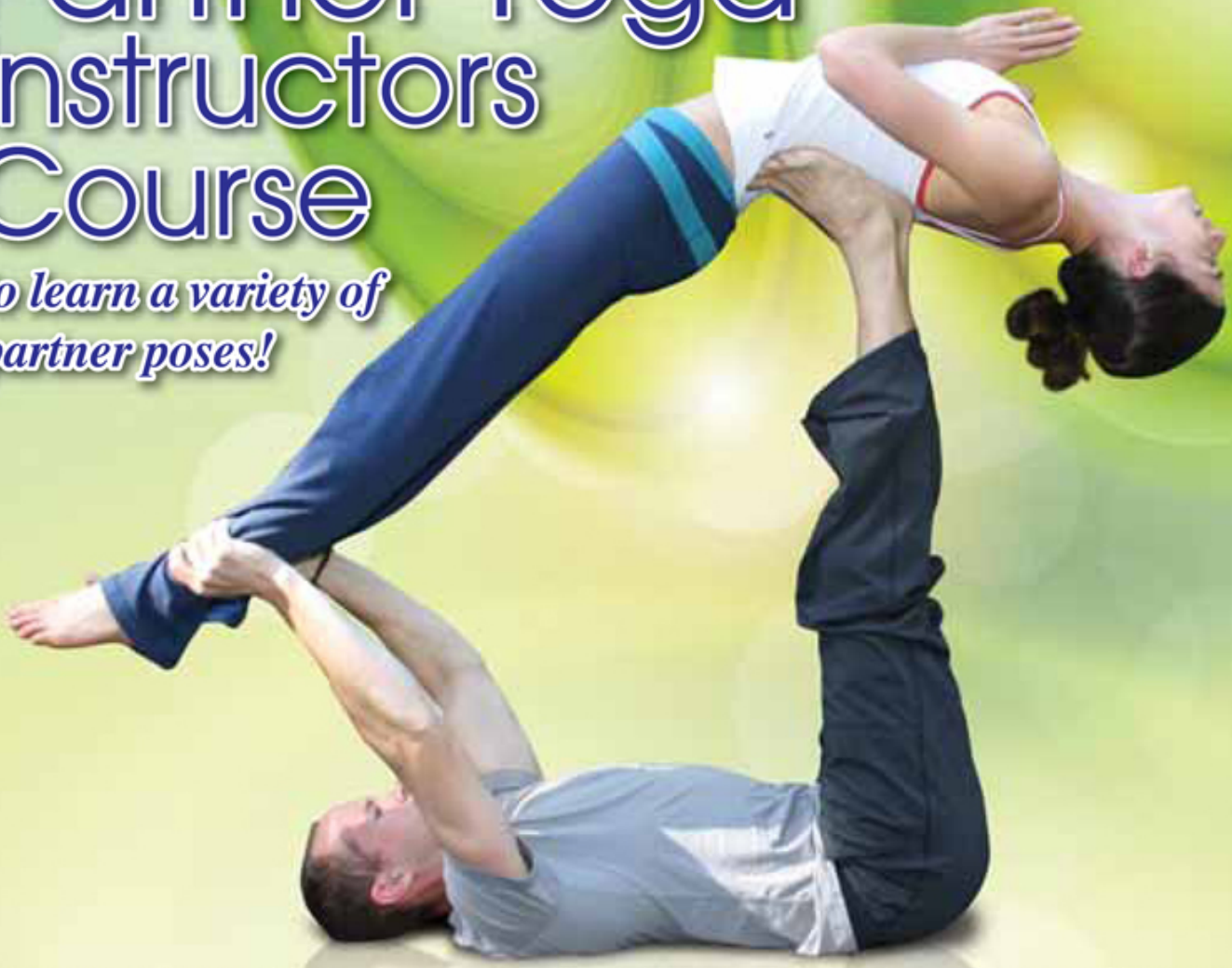
After all, hatha is always waiting – when the student is ready. **YM**



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Partner yoga is meant to be fun.....you will quickly see you must have a sense of humor and creativity. you will feel grounded and centered with each other.....and you will feel mutually supported. Partner yoga is a practice utilizing two people in every pose. Some are partner-assisted stretches (one person adjusting the other into a deeper pose), while others are a series of poses where both partners mutually receive the benefits.

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EVENTS Jala Neti for Better Breathing

The Jala Neti workshop held on 23rd of February 2014 was attended by health enthusiasts eager to learn this ancient and natural way of nasal cleansing. As the Jala Neti practice may seem like 'magical' to most modern people, it is not a secret to yoga practitioners who follow the traditional path. As part of the 'Saucha' (cleanliness) practice, it's vital for yoga practitioners to cleanse themselves of bodily toxins in order for them to perform their daily activities with minimal disturbances caused by imbalances or diseases. Surely, an important practice such as this is not only beneficial to yoga practitioners, but also to others. Words spread afar and we saw participants coming from as far as Johor just to learn this wonderful technique.

Some of the participants enrolled into the workshop because they were experiencing some nasal discomforts such as sinusitis, while some were just curious and eager to learn new techniques. As the benefits of Jala Neti can be experienced as soon as the practice is performed, participants were amazed to see the amount of excessive mucus drained out, instantly providing ease in their breathing. This surprised even those whom, prior to this, assumed that they have no nasal discomforts.

Participants' insights at the end of the workshop…

I really enjoyed and benefited tremendously from this workshop. I've been a chronic sufferer of excessive mucus blockage for many years. It feels good to see so much of that being flushed out. Great class!
-Tan Lee Kim

The Jala Neti workshop has been a completely new experience for me. Understanding the importance of breath and how it interacts with the body is so essential to us. With this new understanding of Jala Neti cleansing, my breathing has become so clear and comfortable.
-Pon Wai Lip

I learnt the use of different herbs for health through Jala Neti. It's very beneficial and there was a lot of sharing on breathing techniques which will help in our daily lives which we have forgotten. I feel good about the hands-on experience and its wonderful effects.
-Ravi

It was a wonderful programme. The technique is easy and I had a GREAT experience. Learning the technique has been positive and educational. I'll share these wonderful experiences with my buddies and family members. Thank you!
-Puspa

After attending this workshop, I realise that Jala Neti, coupled with Kapalabhati, gives very good benefits to our health and emotions as well…
-Janet Wong

Many proclaimed that they will be infusing this wonderful technique into their daily routine and will highly recommend this workshop, which will be held later in July, to their family members and friends! **YM**



EVENTS Yoga Sessions at Pure Life Society

By K. Saravana Sealan

Malaysian Yoga Society (MYS) conducts weekly yoga sessions at the Pure Life Society, and it has since been an awesome, fun-filled journey for the children and the trainers alike.

I could hear Master Mani's words ringing in my ears, "We at MYS may be wearing the same uniform, but we have our unique individuality and style as leaders", when I decided to assist Prem Anantha (Learn to Teach, Teach to Learn graduate from camp 2013), to teach there. Prem expressed his nervousness in taking the first class at the Pure Life Society.

While introspecting, we realised that what we chose to call 'stress' was actually our enthusiasm preparing its creative 'juice' to make our vision a reality!

A few words from the volunteers

Seeing the joy in the kids' eyes makes me want to come back and share more. Sharing my knowledge of yoga with these kids gives me a sense of peace and serenity. I also realised that it is not easy being a teacher and there is a commitment and duty one has to fulfil. I am greatly thankful to have been given this opportunity and I am glad to share karma yoga with more people.
Dinagaran

Being blessed with love, care and joy is what one ever wants, right? When there is love, opportunity, success and a positive mindset will come on its own accord, because we'll all be carrying the universal energy of love. Let me share my blessings with you, I think you deserve it too. When I went to Pure Life Society to teach yoga to the kids, I experienced magic happening around and within me. We started off with yoga, mini games and ended with beautiful bhajans. I was enthralled by the enthusiasm, purity and beautiful energy the children shared with us: Saravana Sir, Nemala akka and me. Wow! What a beauty it was, watching them enjoying themselves. Do you know how lovely they were? Their singing was pitch perfect! Listening to them, I felt a sudden explosion of happiness and contentment. I heard that now, they even do yoga during their free time. Mission accomplished!
Turiya Deva



The experience of Karma Yoga with the Pure Life Society children was beyond imagination for me. The children had so much of energy that to be able to cater to their needs was almost impossible, if it was not with the help of awareness and right intention. Besides that, we had to creatively infuse various methods to make them feel that Yoga too is lots of fun! It was in this process that the magic decided to happen! I realised that the more I enjoyed doing yoga, the more the children enjoyed it too. When I focused and increased my attention, so did the children! I was amazing how their mind was a reflection of mine. This is why I would say that the essence of Karma Yoga allowed me to have the best opportunity in life. The experience of yoga with the children allowed me to understand myself better and allowed me to find the easiest path to heal and cleanse myself. All these while having an opening to share and practise this amazing art of yoga. Thanks to teacher Saravana Sealan who set us to the frequency and shared the plan upon inviting us to follow him for the Karma Yoga in Pure Life Society. Not to mention the extra discourse we have after the session with the children. It made me realise further that Karma Yoga is a GIFT readily waiting for all.
Nemala Nalathamby



EVENTS Follow-Up Yoga Sessions for Yoga Camp's Teens

By K. Saravana Sealan

When there is no vision, people perish …
The visionary would require strong support from awesome individuals to inspire, touch and liberate more lives while transforming them into visionaries themselves, one day!

That has been the vision of Master Mani in introducing the Malaysian Yoga Society (MYS) National Yoga Camp 2013 for the teenagers…

MYS conducts weekend follow-up yoga sessions for the graduates of the camp to inspire and unleash the leadership quality in them.

Testimonial from volunteers

I was given an opportunity to share my learning in yoga with a group of enthusiastic, energetic and awesome teenagers. The experience has brought new perspective in my view of learning. I realised when we are sharing our knowledge, evolution doesn't only take place within the person we are sharing our knowledge with, but also within us. Somehow, during my sharing, some centres in my brain seem to get activated and deeper knowledge is revealed. Hence, in real sense, it is our mastery of the subject which gets enhanced when we volunteer to come out and share. And the best part is, our mastery is also seeding knowledge in others. What a wonder sharing is! Furthermore, it feels great seeing these teenagers learning the great science of yoga. Our small effort helps to equip them with a healthy body and mind to embrace and live life to the fullest. I see this as a great contribution to the younger generation.
So let's enjoy volunteering and sharing.
Karthigeyen





The yoga session for MYS was amazing, especially since my family members decided to drop by to pay a visit at the Bangsar Centre one Sunday. The class was amazingly initiated by Mr Sealan with his "awesome" joint exercises and Surya Namaskar and with Mr Turiya with his variation asanas. When it was my turn, I started off with some simple asanas and had a strong urge to try an advanced asana called "double-handed cobra pose" and I was amazed at being successful at a single try. At that moment, I realised that I'm here not only to teach but also to learn, and that "the more we give, the more we receive". Many thanks to my mum, wife Kastury, brother Vishnu and the children to make it a meaningful Sunday for me. Thanks to dear teachers Mr Sealan, Priya Tee, Master Mani and Turiya Deva.
God bless all of you... Have a great awakening...
Prem Anantha Nawarathnam

The Sunday yoga class was wonderfully energised with beautiful children who excitedly practiced with full determination to get deeper into each posture. The thing which attracted me the most about the class was the attention that was drawn not only to the physical aspects of yoga but the great emphasis on empowering and motivating the children to improve their overall lives. The children were asked to rethink their vision of reality and visualise the most powerful and imaginative ambition for themselves and then believe that that will be their reality in life when they are dedicated to whatever they do and are determined to do their best every time. I am reminded that this lesson will always be true, no matter how old we are. "Wonderful lessons on truth and knowing the difference between right and wrong as well as believing YOU CAN!" were also what the children and I took away from this session. Such an awesome experience in just over an hour has certainly made me look forward to the next class!
Tracy Ann Rani Francis

Featured Asana

Udarakarshanasana (Abdominal Stretch Pose)

Step by Step:

1. Squat with the feet apart and the hands on the knees.
2. Inhale deeply.
3. Exhale, bringing the right knee to the floor near the left foot.
4. Using the left hand as a lever, push the left knee towards the right, simultaneously twisting to the left.
5. Keep the inside of the right foot on the floor.
6. Try to squeeze the lower abdomen with the combined pressure of both thighs.
7. Look over the left shoulder.
8. Hold the breath out for 3 to 5 seconds in the final position.
9. Inhale while returning to the starting position.
10. Repeat on the other side of the body to complete one round.
11. Practice 5 to 10 rounds.





Benefits:

- This pose is very useful for abdominal ailments because it alternately compresses and stretches the organs and muscles of this region.
- Relieves constipation.

Contra-indications:

Not for people with knee problems or sciatica.

Articles by Practitioners

COME, CELEBRATE UNITY *by Vijaya*

The other day, I went back home after work around 2am and couldn't find any water coming out of anywhere and I was flabbergasted! It's okay if I could not take a bath, no problem, but I had 2-weeks' pile of clothes waiting to be washed!

Gees! How oblivion I can be.... to think that Pugunes had actually told me earlier in the day of water stoppage at her apartment for the past 2 days and it just didn't register in my head that Brickfields, with so many businesses, high-rises, colours, lamp posts, pomp and fanfare, would be affected as well.

The best thing is that I had very casually suggested that she (being a school teacher) could always take a bath at her school or worst come to worst get a quick one at the yoga centre when she happens to have class.

Then I remembered, in fact, my company toilet doors were locked up due to the same problem. And it finally dawned on me that the water rationing involved my part of the universe as well...

The next morning, a Wednesday, luckily, there was a pail full of water, which I conveniently used before rushing to my regular yoga class at the Brickfields Centre. I went back home and still there was no water, so I couldn't wash clothes or take another round of bath before going to work.

That night, I came back home around 2am again, and was joyfully surprised to see so many pails full of water.

My blessed housemates had filled up all pails available with water, including mine. How very thoughtful of them. I felt very thankful because lots of people's housemates don't do that. Even within families, people are so busy that, at most, their time and concern are exclusively reserved for their own spouses or children only.



Last year December, during National Yoga Camp 2013 at Sg Buloh Saraswathy Tamil school, news came out that there's going to be water rationing in KL and Selangor. After some calls and lots of SMSing between us volunteers and Master Mani, the workers at the school had filled up huge tanks full of water at all toilets. That was commendable work because can you imagine some 200 plus teenagers at the school and there's not a drop of water to go around?

But apparently, the school area wasn't under Syabas's rationing list. All the same, if you know about Sg Buloh Tamil school's perpetual water problem, you'd be thankful of huge tanks full of water anytime.

Otherwise, the camp, for almost 2 weeks, involving 3 different groups of students, was a huge running success. The students learnt the best from Master Mani and other volunteers... and their testimonials stand by that statement.

The volunteers, almost all working, came in very strongly to give all the support they could. I was practically paralysed with amazement. They had their husbands, wives, families or young children to take care of at home but they made it a point to be at the school at any single moment possible.

With just one word from me, Pagwant and Asha had the stage beautifully decorated. Just one word from Saandhi and Dato' Geethanjali was present for the opening ceremony. Just one word, one gesture or one SMS from Master and the whole project gets going through thick or thin... that's the case with all Malaysian Yoga Society's small or mega projects: Malaysian International Yoga Competition, Food Carnival, KidsCare Programme, retreats and camps for students, free yoga classes for school students, etc.

Despite all the diverse moods, preferences, working cultures, thoughts, ideas, people, skin colours, religions and nationalities (for example, Suresh is from India) work gets done in an astonishing show of spontaneity, promptness and perseverance. The awesome Boey flies in from Hong Kong, anytime, as if it's next door to Malaysia.

When it comes to God, the centre is everywhere. From that same space comes this feel of unity.

Unity doesn't just mean you have to gather, have endless meetings, come up with mind-boggling plans and out-of-the-planet ideas, and strict implementation methods all thoroughly planned out and worked out with precision ... with a strong committee backing it all...

Unity means the underlying feeling, the intense drive to exercise the will of the 'One' within each of us... anywhere we are, whatever we're doing. There's only one.

Pagwant sent an email addressing me as a sister from a different mother. But that didn't make sense... we are in fact sisters of a mutual mother, or so I said to her... Master being our dearest, beloved mother — to all.

Yoga means 'union' with the higher self. It's probably not a verb, but a noun. The state of being at one with the higher self.

Yoga doesn't come by easily ... it doesn't come by at all ... unless one is ready to understand the UNITY beneath all the diversity there is.

Coming back to my beloved housemates. I never said one word to them, I don't even see them, due to our different working hours, but they had that thought to include me in their solution for the water problem. That's a huge thing to do. I'm not sure why Pugunes' housemates forgot to keep extra water for her, probably they were oblivious like me for 2 whole days without water dripping out of their taps (smile). **YM**



Articles by Practitioners

Poon Hill: A Trekking Journey *by Jivanti M*



When it comes to penning down words to describe beautiful places and their associated experiences, words do not do justice, but ironically only words can get this far.

The second half of the trip took us to the highlands. We took ourselves up to the highlands by foot.

We were routed to finish the loop. Tikhedunga - Ghorepani - Tadaphani - Poon Hill - Gangthruk. We did not finish the loop. We created our own loop and still had an amazing time.

From Kathmandu, we began our 8-hour journey up to Pokhara, the Shangri-La of Nepal, by our chartered transport. Pokhara is a small tourist town about 200km west of Kathmandu and serves as a base for trekkers who walk the Annapurna range of the Himalayan Mountains. It's a windy way up with elevations rising quickly, and roads are dry and dusty. Still the view is to die for.

The green Seti Gandhaki river from the mountains created a perfect postcard picture. Houses are built by the roadside with the villagers relying heavily on the river for almost everything. Kids bathing, women washing their hair and clothes, but perhaps the most heartwarming sight was the little Nepali kids dressed in their winter school uniform, laughing gaily.

Pokhara. I fell in love with it instantly. It's a chilled out tourist town with sub-tropical weather and loads of winter clothing shops and restaurants that play acoustic music and serve good food.

Trekking Day 1 (Pokhara - Nayapul: Overnight at Tikhedunga)

We boarded the bus at 8.45am and reached Nayapul, 1,000m above sea level at 11.20am. This is the starting point of the trek via foot. The trek is gentle at first and gradually becomes steeper with an amazing view of the Seti River on the left and houses of villagers on the right. The whole journey up to Tikhedunga at 1,600m was beautiful beyond words. It felt like I was in a movie walking through rice-field terraces where buffaloes were ploughing, kids were playing and trekkers were strolling. We trekked at our own pace. I trekked slowly, taking in the view and more photographs, sometimes talking to our guide. I learnt from Ganu, our cool-looking guide, that Nepal is filled with astounding mountain treks, and the most frequented ones were the ABC (Annapurna Base Camp) and EBC (Everest Base Camp), both of which take about 2 to 3 weeks to finish. Perhaps I should attempt the EBC someday.

Night falls early here and by 9pm we were already sleeping as there's nothing much to be done in the little tea houses (mountain lodges which serve as an accommodation for trekkers). It got really cold at night. The person who invented the heating pad was a genius I thought.

Trekking Day 2 (Tikedhunga - Ulleri: overnight at Banthathi)

The next day, from 1,600m at Tikhedunga, we began our journey up to Ulleri, shortly after breakfast. This was an upward journey all the way with 3,800 steps to be climbed. The climb



uphill was hard on the knees but the surrounding view made up for it. We passed gorgeous-looking waterfalls and more beautiful rivers, did a lot of yoga poses, took more pictures, trekked while talking and laughing, sometimes being silently engaged in deep thoughts or no thoughts at all, but definitely welcoming and enjoying nature. The Machapuchere Guest House we stayed in had an astounding view of the Annapurna Mountains. Perhaps the most heroic thing I did during the entire trip was washing my hair and bathing in icy cold water at night. Maybe it was about 2 or 3 degrees in the air. I had the brain freeze. Literally, I felt it froze and a brief paralytic moment followed through. Everything kind of slowed down a little after that. I thought to myself "And you want to do the Everest Base Camp, Jivan? Really?"

Trekking Day 3 (Banthathi - Nangethanthi: overnight at Ghorephani)

We began our day 3 trek from Banthathi to the higher altitudes of Nangethanthi at 2,500m for lunch. This trekking route was through the forest with high altitude plantations, a few waterfalls and little streams. The whole trek reminded me of Mount Kinabalu, 3 years ago. The route was up and down but not as strenuous as the trek is well covered with big forest trees and the occasional calming sound of the rivers. There were plenty of rest stops in between with safe drinking water for a minimal fee, so trekkers don't have to buy their own mineral water and pollute the environment. Ghorephani at 2,840m was our last stop in the highlands before the much-awaited Poon Hill hike the next morning. I reached the village alone, separated from the rest of the group as everyone by this time had established their own pace and I got carried away as usual with capturing the astounding environment around me. The greatest reward after a six-hour walk was another hike 10 minutes off a beaten path to watch the amazing sunset from the Himalayan mountain range with a female Australian trekker who did the entire Annapurna Circuit Range for 23 days with no guide or porter. How's that for an iron lady? This kind of travellers never fail to me inspire me.

Trekking Day 4 (Ghorephani - Poon Hill - Nangethanthi: overnight at Ulleri)

The day we have been all waiting for. The night was too cold and sleep had been intermittent. I was awake at 3.00am though we were only supposed to ascend up at 4.30am. Stepping outside our little teahouse, the cold air kissed us hello and we were greeted by Ms Universe who was clad in a blanket of stars and donned the moon as a hat. What a remarkable sight it was. The youngest member of the trip, Dheeran was also up at 4.30am but stayed sleepy on the porter's back. The hike up to Poon Hill will take an hour and at the altitude of 3,210m, Poon Hill will amaze us.

I still remember the excitement amongst us who were trekking, as if we were about to achieve something that no one has ever done before. At some point of time, I felt like I was running towards the trail because every minute lost on the way could take me further away from missing the first ray of sunshine. Finally, when we got there and the sun rose from behind the snow-capped Annapurna, I went silent.

"Dunniya ko Mathithi" literally means "On Top of the World". It's a feeling that may not be necessarily associated with any location per se. That sunrise at Poon Hill (3,210m) was probably a moment when I felt most alive; where I felt all my senses were open to absorb everything that was around me. I felt like I owned the world yet I had nothing with me except my camera as a companion. A reminding moment where it felt, good to be alive, good to be healthy and good to be doing the things you love…. And that was enough.



Poon Hill picture moments were the best of the lot. We took jumping shots and I fell many times. We hugged each other and rejoiced celebrating nature. The 4 days hike was well worth that one sunrise alone. The whole experience was so enriching. There is always something so great about nature that keeps me wanting to go back to it at any given time. Like a healer, a silent companion giving the best answer without having to say anything at all. I felt truly at peace. This had to be the best state of being.

The same day we trekked much faster down to Ulleri because the awesome 4 -year-old Dheeran was our spirit booster with his amazing level of energy. There's so much one can learn from a kid. Their passion and amusement at every little thing that they come in contact with remind us that we could see beauty everywhere if we want to and be touched by it. We stayed overnight at Ulleri. It was slowly sinking in to me that the trip is finally coming to an end.

Trekking Day 5 (Ulleri – Tikedhunga - Pokhara)

The last day, after breakfast, we trekked the same route down via foot from Ulleri to Tikedhunga before taking the jeep to Pokhara. By this time, I have exhausted all my muscle fibres so much that even lifting a leg felt like a chore. Emotionally, I was so fulfilled because I felt like I formed a new family. The jeep ride down halfway was mutually agreed upon. Haha. It was very bumpy and but also very fun. At the end of the ride everyone rejoiced with the simple pleasures of life – checking into a hotel for a nice warm shower and a comfortable bed.
We spent another one and half days strolling and chilling in Pokhara.

We did a yoga somewhere in the middle. No one said anything. There was no drama. We collectively decided to be sensitive to the needs of others and hence the trip was aptly promoted.

Adjust, adapt and accommodate. Till we meet again Nepal. Some other time. Surely. **YM**

Maha Avatar Kriya Baba Cave

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Yogic Wisdom For Daily Living

IV.15 vastusamye cittabhedat tayoh vibhaktah pantah

by Jamie Spatafore

Due to the variance in the quality of mind-content, each person may view the same object differently, according to his nature and unique way of thinking.

All this time we have been conditioned. We have been conditioned by family, society and culture to "see" things a certain way. The biggest effect of the education system is not knowledge but a moulding of young minds into a certain way of thinking. After all, everyone knows what a tree is right? Have you ever wondered that maybe, just maybe the first person to use the word tree was a practical joker and those arrangement of vowels and syllables actually mean something entirely different? Possibly the joke has been on us this whole time.

The next time you are around a couple of children get a big box of crayons (the one that has many shades of blue, green, red, etc). Dump the box on the floor and tell the kids to draw "blue". See how many different shades of blue are used. That is a perfect example of this yoga sutra.

Sure, we all see the sun and can identify it as such. However, ask a group to describe the sun and see how many different responses you get. What determines those different responses? Each being has his own program that has been installed since birth. Truthfully some of the program was already there on the day he/she was born. However, the program gets tweaked as we go along. Society plays a role. Culture plays a role. Family plays a huge role.

Fully understanding this should assist us in daily living. If I know that my neighbour's program is entirely different to mine then how can I get upset with him when he does something I think is strange? Understanding that and really accepting that into the heart is known as Unity. We don't have to spend every moment together. We don't even have to really talk to each other. My acceptance is all that is needed for a state of Unity. He doesn't have to accept me. I accept him.

There is a lot going on right now in my adopted country of Malaysia. Each side claims that they know what is right. But if we look at this verse then we can see that actually neither side is right. Also, neither side is wrong. It is just different perceptions of the same object. The problem starts when we try to make each other "see" the same as us. It has never happened and it will never happen. History has shown us that and if we aren't careful we'll end up with a disaster.

Sure, a majority group in power may be able to inflict a viewpoint on the minority and the minority may temporarily acquiesce but in the long run it never succeeds. It only brings contempt from the group being infringed upon.

Instead what is needed is the space to create, develop and acknowledge our own viewpoint all the while acknowledging the validity of someone else's.

I've got three kids. On hindsight, three is the totally wrong number to have. Someone always loses out. Just the other day we were all in the car. Two kids were very hungry and one kid was not. What do I do? I have to remain passive as each viewpoint is totally valid. I was hoping that someone would give in but no one did. It was an impasse. Later when contemplating the situation, the problem was clear. Each side considered their viewpoint to be right and the only one that mattered. The last part is the most important so I'll repeat. Their viewpoint was the only one that mattered. Now this situation eventually got diffused and it may not seem very big to you but I ask you how often do we do that ourselves? Why do we think that our viewpoint is the only one that matters?

What Patanjali is saying in today's terms is this: Look here, everyone is looking at the same mountain but some are viewing from the north, some from the south, some from the east and some from the west. All of these viewpoints are dependent on the direction they happen to find themselves. Is this important at all? No. Two things are important to know. 1. Each being has a unique viewpoint and that is perfect in itself 2. The mountain is still the mountain from any angle.

Take this verse and apply it to everything we know including society, religion, and culture.
It should help us remain at peace. **YM**

At Your Fingertips:
Brahmi – The Brain Tonic

by NSR Centre

For centuries, the brain was a mystery even after years of research into the biological processes underlying its specific actions. Only in the last few decades have scientists begun to unravel its secrets. Brain not only controls and coordinates vital life processes, it regulates higher level operations such as memory and cognition, and functions that provide us with the capacity to think, reason and act. These mental abilities, however, have been observed to diminish significantly due to different factors. Gradual deterioration may progress to a point where the person, often in good physical health, is unable to perform even simple daily tasks.

Have you noticed that your memory is not as sharp as it once was?

Is the stress of the modern world affecting your emotion and memory?

You would like to speed up your learning process but there's no more room for additional information. The good news is, a little green plant called Brahmi may be just what you are looking for.

Brahmi, or scientifically known as Bacopa monniera, has a bitter taste and has been used in the Ayurvedic system of medicine for centuries. Brahmi is a creeping plant that grows naturally in India and has a long history of use in the Ayurvedic medicine tradition in the treatment of a number of disorders, particularly those involving anxiety, intellect and poor memory. Traditionally, it was used as a brain tonic to enhance memory development, learning and concentration. Originally given to infants in order to improve their intelligence, Brahmi has gained recent scientific support for its beneficial effects on the brain and learning. Brahmi has rapidly become popular and in demand around the world for these reasons.

Brahmi leaves are petiole, oblong, sessile and fleshy. Its flowers are purple in colour. In India and the tropics, it grows naturally in wet soil, shallow water and marshes. The herb can be easily cultivated if adequate water is available. Its flowers



and fruits appear in summer and the entire plant is used medicinally.

Research shows that Brahmi contains 2 types of chemicals known as Bacosides A and B.These are the substances that promote brain health and function. This chemical will improve the transmission of impulses between nerve cells in the brain. The neurobiological effects of these isolated molecules were found to increase protein activity and new protein synthesis, specifically in cells in the region of the brain associated with long-term memory.

Brahmi is a nervine herb that is beneficial in rectifying neurologic and psychiatric disorders. It increases the level of serotonin in the body -- a brain chemical known to promote relaxation. The herb's ability to boost brain function while reducing anxiety may explain why it is beneficial for ADHD (Attention-deficit/hyperactivity disorder).It is unique in its ability to invigorate mental processes whilst reducing the effects of stress and nervous anxiety. This makes Brahmi extremely applicable in highly stressful work or study environments where clarity of thought is as important as being able to work under pressure. Additionally, Brahmi helps soothe the restlessness and distraction that nervousness cause. Brahmi is ideal for this modern world where stress is inevitable.

Traditionally, it has been given to children as a herb to boost brain power. A study of the herb's effects on children show that they have significant improvement in exploratory drive, improved perceptual image of patterns and increased perceptual organisation and reasoning ability.

Benefits of using Brahmi:

- Brahmi has been found to be very beneficial in the treatment of anxiety neurosis and mental fatigue. It helps to decrease anxiety, restlessness and senility. It helps to promote relaxation and calmness.
- It has been found to significantly improve IQ levels, memory recall, general ability, behavioural patterns and mental concentration in adult and children. It is most commonly used to improve mental alertness and enhance learning and academic performance.
- Brahmi is used for the treatment of epilepsy, insomnia, asthma and rheumatism.
- The plant is used for all sorts of skin problems like eczema and psoriasis, and is said to stimulate the growth of skin, hair and nails.

Scientific research on Brahmi:

Brahmi is used in Indian Ayurvedic medicine as a brain tonic. It has a naturally occurring nitric oxide that according to studies have positive effects on brain activity. The plant has Bacosides that release nitric oxide that relax the aorta and veins, allowing smooth blood flow that nourishes the nerve cells, **improves cognitive capability, promotes mental clarity and focus.**

Brahmi is used as a memory enhancer. A study conducted to test its chronic effects on human memory, done in the University of Wollongong, Australia, suggests that Brahmi shows a significant action of enhancing the capacity of the subjects to **retain new information while maintaining the capability of learning.**

Brahmi is used as treatment for Alzheimer's disease. In a study (J. Ethnopharmacol, 2009), a model was conducted with induced Alzheimer's disease. The test showed the model who was given a dose of up to 80mg/kg of Brahmi extract had **improved cognitive capability** and **mitigated the further reduction of brain neurons.**

Brahmi has neuroprotective effect. Studies conducted in Naresuan University in Thailand (2008) suggest that in an induced neuron cell death (neurotoxicity) in the primary cortical culture, extracts of the herb has a positive effect in neurons, **preventing the progressive reduction in mass thus mitigating neuro degeneration.**



Brahmi as stress-reducing herb. Study shows that it has anti-stress activity in test models. The effect on the brain is that it modulates activities of the brain chemicals, thereby preparing **the brain to act in adverse conditions such as stress.**

Brahmi as an anti-ulcer herbal medicine. Studies suggest that in an acid-induced ulcer, in a study model, Brahmi extract has shown an anti-ulcer and ulcer healing activity. It is believed that Brahmi effects a mucosal offensive and defensive action, **limiting the growth of helicobacter pylori, preventing gastric ulceration and promotes healing.**

This great herb is one of the most popular and most sought after by people around the world for its immense functionality and efficacy. NSR Centre's Brahmi comes in a glass bottle and can be shipped to all states in Malaysia. If you would like to know more or purchase this herb, do contact us at NSR Centre, Damansara Utama: 03-7724 1072

* This information is meant to supplement, not to diagnose, treat, cure or prevent any disease and not to replace advice from your doctor or healthcare provider. This information may not fit your specific health circumstances. You should always speak with your healthcare professional before you start, stop or change any prescribed part of your healthcare plan or treatment. **YM**

Yoga Therapy for Hypertension/ High Blood Pressure *by Surya Tay*

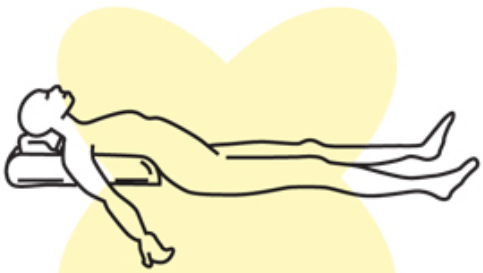
Yoga can be a very beneficial therapy to lower high blood pressure naturally. The mind and body is soothed and settled by performing gentle yoga stretches, gradually reducing stress level. The parasympathetic nervous system, responsible for rest and repair, tend to switch on during yoga practice while the sympathetic nervous system, used for the fight-or-flight stress response, becomes turned off. Increased parasympathetic activity allows the nervous system to become more balanced, freeing up the body's inherent self-healing response.

Yoga Asanas:
Pawanmuktasana 1 – is a series of joints exercises that frees all the joints and tissues around the joints to improve overall circulation

Poorna titali asana



Shavasana



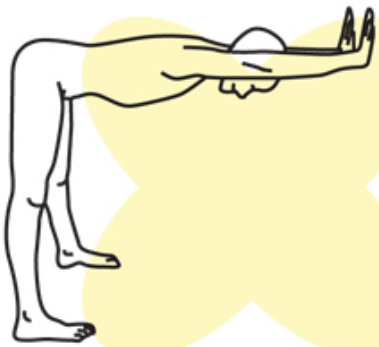
Vajrasana



Wide seated pose



Samakonasana



Matsya kridasana



Pranayama (Breathing techniques):
Sheetali and Seetkari cooling breath, Nadi Shodana, Brahmari

Yoga Nidra (Yogic Sleep) which leads to a state of conscious deep sleep for extreme relaxation

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Eco's Echoes:
Everything Is Connected To Everything Else! (Part 1)

by Ravin.S

The universe is a pretty extraordinary place. Uncountable billions of galaxies and stars are continuously forming a vast web which is stretching away in all directions. In this massive universe lies one perfectly spiral-shaped galaxy called the Milky Way. Within that galaxy exists a common place — a yellow star orbited by eight planets and a dwarf planet. One of those planets is earth, which was born around 4 billion years ago. We humans arrived recently, around 200,000 years ago. We are blessed with a wonderful 4-billion-year-old heritage bestowed by earth. Remember, life is a connection in a chain of inestimable living beings that have prospered alongside one another. All the successive species on earth have inhaled the same oxygen and drunk the same water. Yes! It means that we have a huge responsibility to preserve the entire creation so that everything is proportionally balanced.

Yet, something is not right. Statistic states that every year 13 million hectares of forests disappear. One mammal in four, one bird in eight and one amphibian in three is threatened with extinction. Since 1950, fish catches and animal slaughter has increased from 47% to 78% a year. Species are dying out at rhythm 1,000 times faster than the natural rate. We are destroying the cycle of a life that was given to us without mercy. More shockingly, we are harming our own race. One human in six now lives in a precarious and unhealthy way without access to daily necessities. Five thousand people die in a day due to dirty drinking water. One billion people have no access to drinking water. And nearly 1 billion people are going hungry daily. Only in 50 years' time, since 1950, the gap between rich and poor has grown wider than ever before. Today, half of the world's wealth is in the hands of the richest 2% of the overall population.

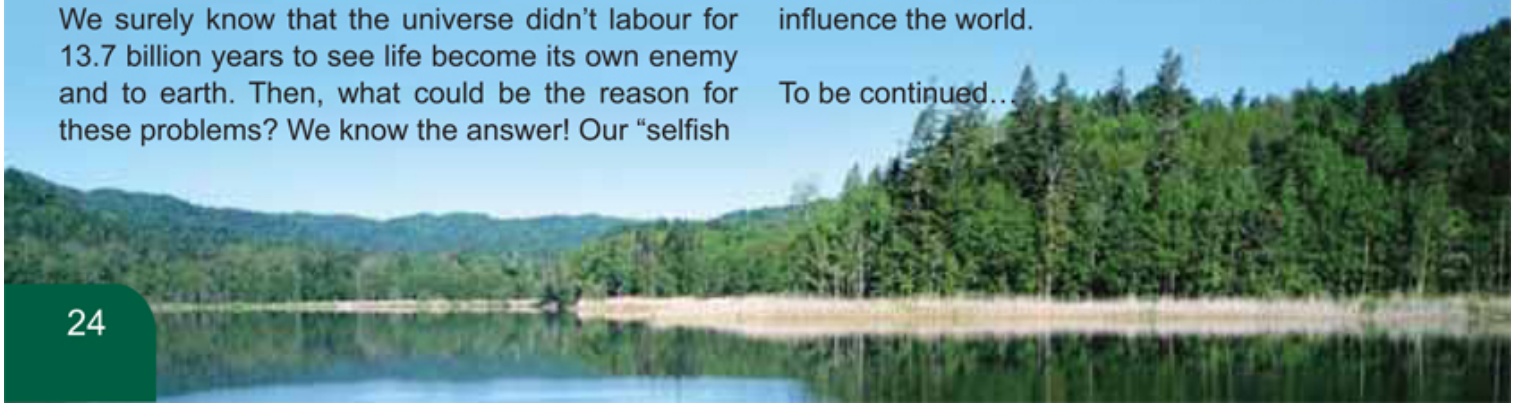
We surely know that the universe didn't labour for 13.7 billion years to see life become its own enemy and to earth. Then, what could be the reason for these problems? We know the answer! Our "selfish act towards materialistic greediness" plays a great part surely. For example, in 2010, the BP oil spillage caused the death of most of marine life in the Gulf of Mexico. Even oxygen there was exterminated. And we haven't yet found ways to fix that. May be we'll just have the comfort of understanding that no other species can question us because the rules are made for our benefit. Can we escape the consequences?

In 2003, I was blessed to meet a Saint who had devoted himself in obtaining the astuteness of life. His presence projected calmness that sated those who were in his presence. Surrounded by his celestial love, the Saint said, "SEE THE WORLD FEELINGLY… SEE THE WORLD FEELINGLY…". This phrase explains the problem we are facing now.

The Saint continued, "There was a time when there were fewer people, and they lived with devotion to the land. They knew the language of rain and the crops, and they communicated with the Great Universe. They were conscious that life is sanctified. They believed that everything in the world is connected to everything else. During this time, there was balance, and people lived in harmony. But over time, things changed. Their liveliness was used to defend themselves from the world around them, instead of making peace with the world within them".

His thoughts resonated with mine. Human beings cut off their relationship with nature and turned their focus to acquiring unprecedented comforts instead. We used to live with an understanding that everything is linked, but it seems the knowledge has expunged over time and now we are demanding a reason to believe that we are indeed connected. Science is giving us the reason for our logical mind to see how we are related and how we actually influence the world.

To be continued…



Inner Insights: From Practitioner to Instructor

by Pellyshire Low

I first encountered MAYI through the Food Carnival in 2010, under the recommendation of my previous pregnancy yoga class instructor. With my husband and children in tow, I went in search of good food but we were surprised to find ourselves witnessing the concurrent Malaysian International Yoga Competition as well. Soon after the carnival, I received an email about the classes offered by MAYI and their attractive annual membership packages. I decided to sign up, looking forward to some "real" yoga classes, as all the while I had only attended yoga classes at fitness centres.

When I first attended MAYI classes in 2011, I had no idea what Shavasana was. To my surprise then, the environment at MAYI is very unlike the decorated fitness centres – mirrored walls and music are both absent here. I was certainly not used to this new environment. Albeit, I was committed to attend the classes after having signed-up for the one-year membership package. I felt lucky as the instructors were very patient at guiding me along the way. Naturally, I began to enjoy the classes and the environment here. I also started to understand and appreciate the simplicity of the set-up.

I felt so at ease with the classes that after a year, I renewed my membership upon its expiry. 1 ½ years into the practice, I felt that I was yearning for something different. This thought prompted me to consult with a few instructors. They encouraged me to join the International Yoga Instructor Course (IYIC). At that time I was not interested in teaching and wanted to just continue as a yoga practitioner. After further discussions, I decided to enroll in the course. It thrilled me to discover that the knowledge and the insights gained throughout the course validated my decision to complete the intensive IYIC Level 1, 2 and 3 continuously. The IYIC has given me an amazing foundation to begin with and I learnt not only about the benefits of the asanas, but their contra-indications as well – an aspect which I personally find important.

Immediately after the course, I started to teach my own family members and friends (which was proudly promoted by my mother ☺) as it didn't feel right to keep the knowledge to myself. It dawned on me that Yoga is an amazing practice and it is in need of more dedicated instructors to share it with others. With this, I resolved to continue teaching. During this period, I also enrolled in the Apprentice Programme with MAYI to sharpen my instructing skills. Every class which I conduct is an opportunity for me to share with the students and I'm thoroughly enjoying it. By word of mouth through my husband (who initially preferred me to stay at home taking care of both kids), family and friends, I have more students joining me. I'm touched by their trust and support, and happy to witness their overall health improvements.

Being a certified Yoga instructor doesn't mean that I've learnt it all. The learning continues and I enrolled into the Kundalini Kriya Yoga course – a wonderful course which brings me to a different level of knowing and understanding my own self, and deepening self-awareness. This gradual self-evolution allows me to provide better guidance to my students. I'm beyond words with this amazing awareness. And now I am eagerly looking forward to advance through more yoga courses.

Both my daughters are currently attending the Super Yoga Kids class and they enjoy it so much! We sometimes practice yoga together at home and the bonding between us feels so warm. Now, I am encouraging my husband to join us too! **YM**



Inner Insights: The Yogi's Panadol

by Petra Gimbad

A friend, whom I worked with earlier in Indonesia, visited Malaysia for work. She was, and still is the director of a human rights organisation that deals with girls and young women facing the potential consequences and impacts of unsafe abortion.

She had just passed through India and was keen to purchase neti pots for herself and her friends. It was my mother and I who had introduced the practice to her.

"I went through India and asked everyone I knew where to buy this neti pot and nobody knew what a neti pot was!" she exclaimed.

We laughed hard. I brought her to MAYI Yoga Academy, where she purchased a few to take home to Indonesia.

I read up about Jala Neti and found the part about energy balancing fascinating. This is despite earlier warnings of "feeling like drowning". When you have a pot stuck up one nostril and trying not to choke, you will pay attention, and you will focus on getting your breathing and body position right.

I was excited to discover that Jala Neti really did calm me down, as it was exactly what I needed as an exhausted, stressed out and insomniac social worker. Its claims to help with depression were possibly true as well as I avoided slipping into depression as easily as I had in the past, which provided just enough time to wrap up and return to postgraduate studies.

Actually, rather than drowning, Jala Neti felt like swimming.

Some time ago, Mei Wan, the editor of this newsletter, told me that she turns to Jala Neti when she feels a flu coming on, and has not consumed Panadol for the last few years.

At first, I was sceptical whether salt water was enough to prevent a cold, or cure it. I quietly reasoned that it must be her regular yoga and meditation practices that kept her strong and healthy.

Suki, another instructor, came into my life to show me otherwise.

When I met Suki, I had already left social and human rights work. However, my last job's stresses and other events had taken their toll on my immune system. As a result, I often fell ill with fevers and flus.

I was exhausted, and I was feeling more sick of antibiotics than I was with the actual physical illness.

Suki reminded me of the Jala Neti practice, which admittedly, reduced some of the symptoms. However, the illness lingered.

She then suggested that I add a little ginger or turmeric to the salt water, which I did in copious amounts – more than enough to burn my nostrils. However, I immediately felt better. I decided to dilute the water and to continue with the practice.

Reluctant to let the remaining litre of water go to waste, my mother, surprisingly, took off with the leftover salt and turmeric water to follow suit.

She returned in a daze to report that her eyesight had improved slightly.

I repeated the process thrice daily and recovered with fewer symptoms a few days after.

I asked my friend from Indonesia how the Jala Neti practice was treating her?

"It's good!" she said. "It really helped my sinusitis. When I went to Switzerland to visit my fiancé, I did not have to touch my health insurance at all. Every time I felt a flu coming, I would do Jala Neti and my fiancé thought I was crazy! But I told him, 'you will see'.

"And finally, he did!" **YM**



super yoga kids corner

Educating the Whole Child

UNITING KIDS: WITHIN AND BEYOND



Learning to share is an important stepping stone towards unity. Sharing, one of the most important life skills, is something that children need to learn in order to experience a harmonious existence with other children. A child who loves to share, in turn, loves and understands the dynamics of working as a team. This amazing quality will then echo through the teenage and adult years.

Children are first exposed to the concept of sharing and teamwork through play with their siblings or playgroup members. They may have conflicting thoughts in the beginning, to decide whether to keep their precious toys to themselves even though it means to have to play alone, or to share the toys in order to have a playmate (at this stage, sharing would seem as though they are actually parting with their toys/belongings). As a solution, they (mostly toddlers) will opt to play with their own toys while sitting beside each other. This comfort zone is put to test when one child decides to 'explore' the neighbour's toys. The reaction to this scenario varies – some may holler at the dismay of his toy/s being taken, some may calmly observe and carry on unperturbed, and some may even decide to take the other child's toys as a trade-off. Whatever the initial results may be, children will eventually learn many concepts from the experiences of this recurring scenario – attachment, detachment, sense of ownership, sharing, empathy, teamwork and many more. The learning experience can be put into a positive light when adults are present to provide guidance and help toddlers make sense of the situation.

Promoting and creating opportunities for children to experience teamwork is important. Teamwork requires children to work harmoniously towards a shared vision. For teamwork to be effective, all members of the group must form mutual respect, understanding and appreciation towards each other's roles. Viewed as the most important social activity, teamwork and unity requires each individual's ability to go beyond personal gains and move towards a collective goal. As working as a team demands interpersonal interaction, it builds a child's social and communication skills as well.

The concept of unity is not man-made. It is within us and it surrounds us.

Looking Within…

Everyone has an innate sense of unity. When observed closely, we would find that our whole body system is a testament of perfect unity. Children can be introduced to the concept of unity with the body system as an analogy. Great examples are often found in the Yoga class. When attempting a balancing pose, for example, the position of the limbs and trunk of the body, the breath and the state of mind (calm and focused) are all important points leading to

the 'success' of the pose. Although externally it may not seem like much when the Yoga poses were performed, it actually requires mass inner coordination and bodyworks. The same effort applies to other seemingly routine activities which may have been taken for granted all these while, such as walking, skipping and etc. In other words, the unity of the body, mind and breath is inevitable in our everyday activities.

Looking Around…

Another great analogy is the environment – flora and fauna. Take a tree for example – the roots, the trunk, the branches and the leaves all have a vital role to play. The roots draw water from the soil, the trunk provides strength to promote upward growth, the branches help to make sure the leaves are not cluttered together (so every piece of leaf has the opportunity to carry out its function), and the leaves draw sunlight and produce 'food'. Trees provide shade and food for animals and insects, which in turn may carry the seeds and drop them elsewhere for growth.

The Stepping Stone towards Unity

As much as we (adults) would like to instil the sense of Unity in our children, it would be futile by just yelling, 'You MUST share with your brother/sister!' Doing so, might only give you a headache and possibly a sore throat! It could also lead to possible sibling jealousy or rivalry if one child is often asked to share just because he/she is elder. Having said that, it would be easier for us to note some of the important attributes that build unity and instil it in our children from young.

For example:

- Introducing different playing materials to children can help to build the sense of appreciation. While doing so, explain to them what each material has helped them learn while not being judgemental of their superiority or inferiority in appearance. The appreciation of differences will then be carried into interpersonal communications – seeing each member in the society as an important person. Here, 'timid' children will also establish self-worth and self-appreciation.
- The practice of turn taking is another important activity. While children wait for their turn, they learn about patience and respect. When respect is built, children are more likely to maintain harmony in a social group. Harmony is the basis in building trust. And trust is an important element in building unity.
- Sitting in a circle for some group activities enable each member to have a clear view of each other. It allows children the companionship of others and it makes everyone in the group feel that they belong. The view of physical presence enables children to establish verbal and non-verbal communications among themselves – an important social skill.

When children learn about appreciation, trust and respect, introducing team or group work will be easier. As we all know, group activities create a huge avenue for children to learn about unity. Everyone in the group will learn to communicate and cooperate to solve problems. Above all, they will learn to share ideas and celebrate each other's individuality.

SYK classes include Yoga Kids Class, Teens Yoga Class, Family Yoga Class and Pregnancy Yoga Class. For more information about Super Yoga Kids, log on to www.superyogakids.com or find us at Facebook: SYK Superyogakids

YM



Chef Yogi's Food Notes!

Corn Salsa

Method

1. Place a heavy based pan on medium-high heat.
2. Once pan is well heated, carefully add the whole corns and cook each side for around 15 minutes, or until lightly golden all over (turn with tongs regularly to cook evenly).
3. Remove from pan and leave to cool slightly on a cutting board.
4. Hold the seared corn steadily on the board with a clean tea towel to protect your hand, then carefully run a sharp knife down the sides to remove the kernels. Transfer kernels into a mixing bowl.



Ingredients

- 4 whole corns
- ½ bunch fresh coriander
- 1-2 fresh red chilli
- 4 spring onions
- 3 ripe tomatoes
- sea salt
- 2 limes
- 1 tablespoon extra virgin olive oil

5. Chop fresh coriander coarsely.
6. Cut each chilli in half lengthways. Hold the stalk end of each half then run a teaspoon down the cut sides to scoop out the seeds and white pith – if you don't want it too hot. Finely slice the chilli.
7. Trim and finely slice the spring onions.
8. Chop up the tomatoes and add them to the bowl of corn kernels along with the chopped coriander, sliced chilli, spring onions and a tiny pinch of salt.
9. Cut limes in halves. Squeeze lime juice into the bowl, drizzle extra virgin olive oil over the corn mixture and toss well. Serve as a side dish or use as a filling for tortilla wrap.

Tip:
Using the palm of your hand, press and roll the limes around on a work surface before you cut them in half – this will help you squeeze lots more juice out of them.

Schedule of Courses: Apr - Aug 2014

APRIL 2014

18-20/4/2014	BSR	Pregnancy Yoga Instructor Course
20/4/2014	BSR	Anti-Aging Workshop

MAY 2014

4/5/2014	DU	Precision & Alignment: Level 1 Practitioner Workshop 1
4/5/2014	BFS	Super Yoga Kids Instructor Course
5/5/2014	DU	International Yoga Instructor Foundation Course
11/5/2014	BSR	International Yoga Instructor Course - Advance
11/5/2014	DU	Precision & Alignment: Level 1 Practitioner Workshop 2
18/5/2014	DU	Precision & Alignment: Level 1 Practitioner Workshop 3
25/5/2014	DU	Precision & Alignment: Level 1 Practitioner Workshop 4

JUNE 2014

6/6/2014		Ayurveda Massage Therapist Course
8/6/2014	BSR	Yoga Sharing Open Day
22/6/2014	BSR	Introduction to Chakra Workshop
28/6/2014	BSR	Partner Yoga Instructor Course
29/6/2014	BSR	International Yoga Instructor Foundation Course

JULY 2014

6/7/2014	BFS	Super Yoga Kids Insturctor Course
6/7/2014	BSR	Yoga Therapist Certification Course
11/7/2014	BSR	International Yoga Instructor Foundation Course
13/7/2014	BSR	Jala Neti Workshop
19/7/2014	BSR	Prana Vidya Course

AUGUST 2014

3/8/2014	DU	Herbs that Heal Workshop
10/8/2014	DU	Yoga Sharing Open Day
11/8/2014	BSR	International Yoga Instructor Foundation Course
16/8/2014	BSR	Dhyana (Meditation) Instructor Course
17/8/2014	BSR	Pregnancy Yoga Instructor Course
30/8/2014	Kandiah Hall, Brickfields	Malaysian International Yoga Competition 2014

BFS: Brickfields; BSR: Bangsar; DU: D'sara Uptown
**Subject to change without prior notice*

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Venue: Kandiah Hall, SJK[T] Vivekananda, Brickfields, KL.
Time: 9:00am - 6:00pm

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